

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (currently amended) An apparatus comprising: a handpiece providing, at a distal end thereof, an axial cannula, the handpiece further providing an axial channel engaging a sleeve of an optical fiber, the axial channel terminating at the axial cannula; the axial cannula of such size as to receive advancement of the optical fiber therewithin, while blocking advancement of the said sleeve, said sleeve being a size larger than into the axial cannula; a hollow compression cap threadedly engaged within converging threads of a proximal end of the axial channel; the compression cap providing axially oriented fingers enabled, upon advancement of the compression cap into the converging threads, for closing on said sleeve while being unable to close on a selected further sleeve of lesser size than said sleeve ~~a means for gripping the sleeve upon advancement of the~~ ~~compression cap into the channel~~, so as to selectively prevent axial motion of the said sleeve and optical fiber, a distal end of the fiber providing markings at spaced intervals.

Claim 2. (cancelled)

Claim 3. (cancelled)

Claim 4. (cancelled)

Claim 5. (cancelled)

Claim 6. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a compressible tube positioned and restrained at a proximal end of the channel and axially compressible by advancement of the compression cap, thereby providing a gripping force on ~~the~~said sleeve.

Claim 7. (currently amended) An apparatus comprising in combination: a handpiece providing, at a distal end thereof, an axial cannula, the handpiece further providing an axial channel terminating in a shoulder; a sleeve, coaxially fixed about an optical fiber, set axially within the axial channel ~~and terminating at the shoulder~~; the axial cannula of such size as to receive advancement of the optical fiber therewithin, while ~~the~~said sleeve is blocked from advancement into the cannula by the shoulder, when advanced thereto; a hollow compression cap engaged within a proximal end of the axial channel; the compression cap providing a means for axially oriented fingers positioned and constructed for gripping thesaid sleeve while being unable to grip a sleeve of lesser size, upon advancement of the compression cap into convergent threads in the channel, so as to selectively prevent axial motion of ~~the~~said sleeve and optical fiber, ~~the compression cap~~ distal end of the fiber providing markings at spaced intervals.

Claim 8. (cancelled)

Claim 9. (cancelled)

Claim 10. (cancelled)

Claim 11. (cancelled)

Claim 12. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 7 further comprising a compressible tube positioned and restrained at a proximal end of the channel and axially compressible by advancement of the compression cap, thereby providing a gripping force

on the said sleeve.

Claim 13. (allowed): A method of selectively preventing axial motion of a sleeve and an optical fiber comprising the steps of: providing, at a distal end of an axial channel in a handpiece, an axial cannula; setting a sleeve coaxially about an optical fiber and within the axial channel; forming the sleeve of a size larger than the axial cannula; advancing the optical fiber within the axial cannula; engaging a hollow compression cap within a proximal end of the axial channel; providing a means for gripping the sleeve upon advancement of the compression cap into the channel; threading the compression cap into the channel through converging threads; and tightening axially oriented fingers during advancement of the compression cap into the channel to thereby close the fingers onto the sleeve for gripping thereof.

Claim 14. (cancelled)

Claim 15. (allowed): The method of claim 13 further comprising positioning a compressible tube restrained at a proximal end of the channel, and advancing the compression cap axially thereby compressing the tube to produce a gripping force on the sleeve.

Claim 16. (allowed): A method of selectively preventing axial motion of a sleeve and optical fiber comprising the steps of: providing a handpiece having, at a distal end thereof, an axial cannula, the handpiece further providing an axial channel terminating in a shoulder; placing a sleeve, coaxially fixed about an optical fiber, axially within the axial channel and terminating the sleeve at the shoulder; advancing the optical fiber within the axial cannula while blocking advancement of the sleeve by the shoulder; engaging a hollow compression cap within a proximal end of the axial channel; and providing the compression cap with a means for gripping the sleeve upon advancement of the compression cap into the channel.

Appl. No. 10721927  
Amdt. Date: January 23, 2006  
Reply to Office action of: 7/21/05

Claim 17 (cancelled)

Claim 18 (cancelled)